



ANTI-BULLYING (including cyber-bullying) and ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY and PROCEDURES

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Lavers Hill K-12 College is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students and staff and which encourages self-esteem, cooperation, personal growth and a positive attitude to learning and teaching.

1.2 A clear policy on bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will inform the community that bullying and harassment in any of its forms will not be tolerated. See Appendix A for definitions and effects.

1.3 Our school will actively promote a positive and welcoming personal environment for all members of the school community. Bullying and harassment will be addressed, individual differences will be respected and students and staff will be enabled and supported in their pursuit of learning and teaching.

2 AIMS

- 2.1 To reinforce within the school community that no form of bullying is acceptable.
- 2.2 Everyone within the school community is alerted to signs and evidence of bullying and has a responsibility to report it to staff whether as observer or victim.
- 2.3 To ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are followed up and that support is given to both victim and perpetrator.
- 2.4 To seek parental and peer-group support and co-operation at all times.

3 GUIDELINES

3.1 Approaches

3.1.1 A school-wide approach will be taken to deal with bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment in a consistent and systematic way.

3.1.2 All new students and staff will be informed of all relevant policy and practices at the commencement of their time at the school.

3.1.3 Constructive strategies to deal with harassment will include: education in coping strategies; assertiveness training; problem solving and social skills; counseling and behaviour modification. These strategies will be employed in preference to punitive sanctions and negative consequences.

3.1.4 The Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy of the school will be widely promoted to students, staff, parents/carers and the local community.

3.1.5 A summary of the policy will be included in the Student Enrolment Package while new staff will receive extensive documentation as part of the school's induction process.

3.2 Preventative Programs

3.2.1 The Wellbeing Team will ensure our school will organise preventative curriculum programs that promote resilience, life and social skills, assertiveness, conflict resolution and problem solving.

3.2.2 The school will provide specialist resources such as books, videos, kits and off site in-service activities to assist staff in responding appropriately to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment issues.

3.2.3 Staff programs will occur periodically to keep staff informed of current issues/strategies for dealing with these issues.

3.2.4 Staff will be encouraged to participate in professional development relating to bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment and proven strategies to address these issues in classrooms will be shared with colleagues.

3.2.5 Student programs will be organised to raise student awareness about bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, to provide a forum for discussion of matters and to aid development of attitudes.

3.2.6 Some matters will be dealt with formally in the curriculum and in peer support programs, leadership programs, extra-curricular programs and occasional activities run by outside experts and workers.

3.2.7 The curriculum will include anti-bullying messages and strategies in line with current DEECD materials e.g. 'The Friendly Schools' and 'No Blame Approach to Bullying' programs.

3.3 Action

3.3.1 The school leadership team and the teachers will work together to ensure the safety of all school members in situations of bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment, by thoroughly investigating all complaints while respecting the need for confidentiality, notifying parents/carers and planning interventions.

3.3.2 An appropriate person, such as the PLT leaders for P-4, 5 to 8, 9 to 12 or the Wellbeing team will be nominated to follow up complaints. The Appendices include forms to record complaints and incidences.

3.3.3 All complaints of harassment will be heard in confidence and taken seriously.

3.3.4 If a teacher feels a student is at serious and imminent risk from bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment then it is their professional duty to pass on the information to an appropriate person in order to ensure appropriate support for the student. It is important that teachers document fully their interaction with the student and to verify the actions taken.

3.3.5 There will be explicit consequences, covering a range of strategies, for those identified as demonstrating bullying and/or harassment.

3.3.6 Consequences for bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment will comply with the school's Engagement and Wellbeing Policy and other relevant Policies.

3.3.7 The principal may be involved in delivering consequences if deemed necessary by the PLT leaders, and will provide disciplinary consequences including suspension in accordance with the Lavers Hill K-12 College Student Engagement Framework and follow Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines.

4. LINKS AND APPENDICES (including processes related to this policy)

Links which are connected with this policy are:

- DEECD's [Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- DEECD's [Safe Schools are Effective School's](#)
- DEECD's [Student Engagement Policy Guidelines](#)
- The school's Internet Use Policy (re cyber-bullying)
- DEECD's [Respectful Schools](#)

Appendices which are connected with this policy are:

- Appendix A: Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Definitions and Procedures
- Appendix B: Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template
- Appendix C: Formal Referral of Student who has bullied / harassed other to Student Welfare Coordinator – Template

5. EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed annually or more often if necessary due to changes in regulations or circumstances.

Appendix A: Information in this Appendix is to be provided to students with enrolment material.

Anti-Bullying (including cyber-bullying) and Anti-Harassment Definitions and Procedures

1.0 What are Bullying, Cyber Bullying and Harassment?

1.1 Bullying is repeated oppression, physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group. The intention is to deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion.

1.2 Types of Bullying: There are three broad categories of bullying:

1.2.1 Direct physical bullying – includes hitting, tripping, pushing, shoving, grabbing, aggressive staring, pinching, kicking, damaging property, knocking a person's books or belongings out of their hands or off their desk.

1.2.2 Direct verbal bullying – e.g. name calling, insults, homophobic or racist remarks, verbal abuse, teasing a person, making negative statements based on their looks.

1.2.3 Indirect bullying – this form of bullying is harder to recognise and often carried out behind the bullied student's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes:

- lying and spreading rumours
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- publicly excluding a person from your group
- damaging someone's social reputation and social acceptance
- cyber-bullying, which involves the use of electronic means to humiliate and distress

1.3 What Bullying is not Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management. There are three socially unpleasant situations that are often confused with bullying:

1.3.1 Mutual Conflict In mutual conflict situations, there is an argument or disagreement between students but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the problem. However, unresolved mutual conflict sometimes develops into a bullying situation with one person becoming targeted repeatedly for 'retaliation' in a one-sided way.

1.3.2 Social Rejection or Dislike Unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying.

1.3.3 Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation are not the same as bullying. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied.

1.3.4 Groups of students Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different students is not the same as bullying.

1.4 Cyber-bullying consists of covert, psychological bullying, conveyed through the electronic mediums such as cell-phones, web-logs and web-sites, on-line chat rooms, 'MUD' rooms (multi-user domains where individuals take on different characters) and Xangas (on-line personal profiles where some adolescents create lists of people they do not like).

1.4.1 It is verbal (over the telephone or mobile phone), or written using the various mediums available.

1.4.2 Cyber-bullying can involve

- *Flaming* – online fights using electronic messages with angry or vulgar messages
- *Threats - of any kind*
- *Harassment* – repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages
- *Denigration* – posting or sending gossip or rumours about a person to damage his/her reputation or friendships
- *Outing* – sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online
- *Exclusion* – intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group
- *Cyber-stalking* – repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear

1.5 Harassment is any verbal, physical or sexual conduct (including gestures) which is uninvited, unwelcome or offensive to a person. It may be based on gender, religious or other beliefs, racial, sexual or homophobic harassment.

1.5.1 Harassment can be subtle or explicit

Subtle (the most common) they include:

- offensive staring and leering
- unwanted comments about physical appearance and sexual preference
- racist or smutty comments or jokes
- questions about another's sexual activity
- persistent comments about a person's private life or family
- physical contact e.g. purposely brushing up against another's body
- offensive name calling

Explicit (obvious) they include:

- grabbing, aggressive hitting, pinching and shoving, etc
- unwelcome patting, touching, embracing
- repeated requests for dates, especially after refusal
- offensive gestures, jokes, comments, letters, phone calls or e-mail
- sexually and/or racially provocative remarks
- displays of sexually graphic material – pornography
- requests for sexual favours

1.5.2 Extreme forms of sexual harassment will lead to criminal prosecution.

2.0 What are the effects of Bullying and Harassment?

2.1 Bullying or harassment can often make people feel:

- angry
- embarrassed
- ashamed
- offended
- humiliated
- intimidated
- frightened
- uncomfortable

2.2 Symptoms that may be observed in a victim include

- Loss of self-confidence
- reduced function and potential
- poor health - anxiety, depression
- lower self esteem
- reduced study performance
- missed classes
- social withdrawal
- reduced career prospects

2.3 Potential responses victims of bullying or harassment may experience

- *"I will ignore it and it will go away."*
If anything it will make things worse - you will give the impression that you agree with the situation.
- *"I don't want to cause trouble."*
Most causes of harassment are sorted out quite simply. By speaking up, action can be taken to address the problem.
- *"Am I to blame?"*
Victims of harassment or bullying sometimes feel that it is their fault. Victims are made to feel guilty by the offender and often blame themselves. It is your right to have a safe environment free from harassment or bullying.
- *"Am I imagining things?"*
Often our hunches are correct. Rather than put up with nagging doubts, talk to someone about your feelings.

3.0 What should you do if you see another person being bullied or harassed?

3.1 Tell the person that you witnessed the incident and advise them to report it to an appropriate person. However, if your friend is harassing another person, let them know that their behaviour is unacceptable.

3.2 Bystanders who do nothing to stop bullying may be contributing to the problem by providing an audience for the bully.

3.3 Report the incident to an appropriate adult, such as a teacher at school.

4.0 What do you do if you are being bullied or harassed?

- tell the person you don't like what they are doing and you want them to stop
- discuss the matter with a teacher, Student Wellbeing Team or peer mediator, peer support leader or a teacher that you feel comfortable with
- discuss the matter with a parent or other adult, who may report the incident to the school
- the school will take your concerns seriously - all complaints will be treated confidentially

5.0 Dealing with complaints regarding bullying, cyber-bullying and harassment.

5.1 All concerns and reports will be taken seriously.

5.2 All complaints will be treated confidentially.

5.3 School procedures for responding to a student who bullies or harasses others:

Level 1

If the bullying or harassment incident is minor or first time occurrence, teachers may elect to use one or more anti-bullying practices:

- stopping the bullying
- re-statement of rules and consequences
- restorative conversation
- think time detention
- private conference
- shared control discussion

If the student does not take control over his/her behaviour, an Incident Report Form should be completed and submitted to the student wellbeing team or principal/assistant principal.

Level 2

If the bullying or harassment continues, or in instances of severe bullying or harassing, a referral should be made to PLT leader who may refer the incident on to the Student Wellbeing Team.

Here, the Principal or PLT Leader (or other appropriate person) may:

- meet with the student to develop a behaviour contract
- provide discussion/mentoring of different social and emotional learning competencies including structured learning activities
- conduct a restorative conference separately with the perpetrator and “target”

Level 3

For ‘at risk’ students (many risk factors, few protective factors) whose bullying or harassing behaviour is severe and for other non-at risk students whose bullying or harassing and other aggressive behaviour is resistant to change, an individual ‘strength building’ plan should be developed by the student welfare coordinator in consultation with student, parents/carers and teachers. Individual strength-building plans and associated interventions help connect the student to positive people, programs and actions in the community, school and home as well as develop the student’s inner social and emotional strengths (skills, values).

Level 4

Students whose severe bullying or harassing behaviour resists school efforts and represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing, should be referred to outside agencies for evaluation. The Welfare Team will need to be familiar with those community agencies and organisations that can offer more intensive services to the student and student’s family.

Level 5

The Wellbeing team may choose, if bullying or harassment persists or the initial incident is of such magnitude, to involve the principal & PLT leaders who may commence formal disciplinary action in line with the Lavers Hill K-12 College Student Engagement Framework **& Student Engagement Policy Guidelines'** (DEECD), depending on contextual information relating to the severity of the bullying (including cyber bullying) and harassment.

6. Consideration for a student who may think they are a bully.

6.3.1 A student who is not sure if they are bullying or harassing should be encouraged to discuss their concerns and seek advice as to what to do from an appropriate person or staff member.

6.3.2 The student should be advised that if they are not sure about their behaviour, they should:

- check it out by asking another person if it is offensive or inappropriate
- stop it
- apologise
- take it seriously if someone says they are feeling uncomfortable

6.3.3 The PLT leaders & Wellbeing team may need to interview any potential victims.

6.3.4 The Wellbeing team shall provide support for the person to change their behaviour.

7. Why do we have a Policy on these?

- To provide a safe and friendly college environment for students and staff to encourage care, courtesy and respect for others. All persons have a legal right to protection from harassment under the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* and the *Victorian Equal Opportunity Act*.

- Reporting of any incidents is also entered on the school system COMPASS

Appendix B

Reporting on Incident of Bullying / Harassment – Template

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date: ___/___/___

Name of student(s) who appears to have instigated bullying

Year/Class: _____

Name(s) of target(s)

Name(s) of witnesses

Did you observe the incident? YES No

If 'NO' who reported the incident to you? _____

Brief description of incident (what was allegedly said or done to the student who appears to have been bullied?)

What form(s) of bullying took place? Verbal Physical Indirect Cyber
Other Please detail: _____

Was the incident of bullying: Mild Severe

Describe how you responded (Did you use a school anti-bullying practice?)

Describe how student responded to your intervention

Where / when / time incident took place:

Location: _____

When: before school recess lunch in class after school

Time: _____ : ____ am/pm

Date incident took place: ___ / ___ / ___

Additional comments:

Appendix C

Formal Referral of Student who has bullied / harassed other to Student Welfare Coordinator – Template

(This form may be completed by a classroom teacher, year level coordinator, school administrator or Student Welfare/Wellbeing Coordinator)

Staff member recording incident: _____

Date: ___/___/___ Position: _____

Name of student being referred: _____

Year/Class: _____

History of incident(s) of bullying (dates, description)

Have parents/guardian been notified? YES No

If 'No' why not? _____

Have they attended a conference? YES No

If 'NO' why not? _____

Are they willing to participate? YES No

If 'NO' why not? _____

What appears to be the reason for the student's bullying behaviour (family, peer, school, personal, other)?

What practices have been tried?

Impact

What has been the student's attitude towards student(s) who have been targets? (e.g., any concern or remorse expressed)?

A brief description of academic performance of student over past year or more.

Distinguishing 'at risk' factors of student (e.g. limited English: economic disadvantage of family; ADHD)

PLEASE ATTACH ADDITIONAL WRITTEN INFORMATION AS NECESSARY